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THE REALIZATION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Report updating the study on the right to food prepared by Mr. Asbjørn Eide

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Economic and social rights are now starting to be taken seriously, though still not at the same level as civil and political rights. In recent years, the Sub-Commission has contributed significantly to the revival and strengthening of the interest in these rights through a number of studies, most recently the final report of the study by Mr. Rajindar Sachar on the right to housing (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1995/12), the final report on human rights and extreme poverty by Mr. Leandro Despuoy (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/13) and the incisive study by Mr. Jose Bengoa on the relationship between the enjoyment of human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights, and income distribution (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/9, and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/8) which will be discussed at the present session. Supplementing the earlier studies, such as the comprehensive study by Mr. Danilo Türk on economic and social rights, the study by Mr. El-Hadji Guissé on impunity for the violation of economic and social rights, and drawing also on the increasingly active work done by the relevant treaty bodies, these studies provide a solid basis for efforts by the United Nations bodies to realize the economic social part of the human rights package.

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2. By its decision 1997/108, the Sub-Commission in 1997 decided to request me to review and update, without financial implications, my study on the right to food submitted in 1987 (Human Rights Study Series No. 1, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XIV.2). The Sub-Commission had the year before, in its resolution 1996/25 of 29 August 1996, expressed deep concern that more than 800 million people throughout the world, particularly in developing countries, did not have enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs and had therefore appealed to the World Food Summit, to be held in Rome later that year, to propose, inter alia, ways in which the right to food could be further clarified and implemented.

3. The appeal had been taken into account by the World Food Summit which met in November 1996. It included in its Plan of Action objective 7.4 which, inter alia, invited the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in consultation with relevant United Nations and intergovernmental mechanisms, to better define the rights related to food and to propose ways to implement and realize those rights. This was endorsed by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1997/8 of 3 April 1997. Since then, considerable progress has taken place, as described in this progress report.

4. While the Sub-Commission had wished the updated study to be submitted to the Sub-Commission at its fiftieth session in 1998, I have found it necessary to divide it into a progress report in 1998 and to present the final update in 1999. This will be done without financial implications for the United Nations. The reason is that there is currently accelerating and very promising process within the United Nations system as well as in the international NGO environment in regard to the right to food and other economic and social rights, part of it in conjunction with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It would be desirable to be able to provide more in-depth attention to that process and draw on its results before the final updated report is presented in 1999.

5. In the 1987 report, I examined the available statistics on food, hunger and related issues; regional perspectives on agriculture; environmental concerns and food resources; and the concept of entitlements and command over food. I reviewed in some detail the origin of the inclusion of economic and social rights in the International Bill of Human Rights and their further evolution, starting with the commitments made even during the Second World War to ensure a future where there was freedom from want for everyone, everywhere in the world. The major steps in the subsequent standard-setting were outlined.

6. At the core of social rights is the right to an adequate standard of living (Universal Declaration, art. 25 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 11) which are the provisions which concern us most. This right requires, as a minimum, that everyone shall enjoy the necessary subsistence rights - adequate food and nutrition, clothing, housing and the necessary conditions of care and health services. Closely related to this is the right of families to assistance, briefly mentioned in article 25 and elaborated in greater detail in subsequent provisions such as article 10 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In

the 1987 report, I also listed a great number of other provisions directly or indirectly relating to the right to food and nutrition which could be found in international instruments.

7. The report contained a detailed analysis of the nature of State obligations for human rights, noting that international human rights law, like other parts of international law, is legally binding for States; it is not a set of recommendations, but requirements that have to be implemented.

8. At least three levels of obligations of States were identified: the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil. Failure to perform any one of these three obligations constitutes a violation of the rights. Since then, there has been an interest expressed by many to include "facilitate" in this list since this would subsume most kinds of development assistance.

9. Since State obligations must be seen in the light of the assumption that human beings, families or wider groups seek to find their own solutions to their needs, States should at the primary level, respect the resources owned by the individual, her or his freedom to find a job of preference, to make optimal use of her/his own knowledge and the freedom to take the necessary actions and use the necessary resources - alone or in association with others - to satisfy his or her own needs. The State cannot, however, passively leave it at that. Third parties are likely to interfere negatively with the possibilities that individuals or groups otherwise might have had to solve their own needs. At a secondary level, therefore, State obligations require active protection against other, more assertive or aggressive subjects - more powerful economic interests, such as protection against fraud, against unethical behaviour in trade and contractual relations, against the marketing and dumping of hazardous or dangerous products. This protective function of the State is widely used and is the most important aspect of State obligations with regard to economic, social and cultural rights, similar to the role of the State as protector of civil and political rights. At the tertiary level, the State has the obligation to facilitate opportunities by which the rights listed can be enjoyed. It takes many forms, some of which are spelled out in the relevant instruments. For example, with regard to the right to food, the State shall, under the International Covenant (art. 11(2)), take steps to "improve measures of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge and by developing or reforming agrarian systems". At the fourth and final level, the State has the obligation to fulfil the rights of those who otherwise cannot enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights. This fourth level obligation increases in importance with increasing rates of urbanization and the decline of group or family responsibilities. Obligations towards the elderly and disabled, which in traditional agricultural society was taken care of by the family, must increasingly be borne by the State and thus by the national society as a whole.

10. The report ended with a set of recommendations to States, to specialized agencies, to the Economic and Social Council, to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and to international non-governmental organizations. Part of the updated report to be presented in 1999 will review the follow-up that has been given to those recommendations. It will be noted

from the content of this progress report, however, that there has been a significant increase in attention to the right to food and nutrition in the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

II. MAJOR TRENDS IN THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SITUATION WORLDWIDE

11. Since my original report, statistics have improved, especially as regards differentials and trends in the nutritional situation globally and regionally. As mentioned in the report this has happened thanks to the work of the Subcommittee on Nutrition of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC/SCN) through its periodic Reports on the World Nutrition Situation (RWNS), the first having been published in November 1987. This was a few months after my report, which is why the statistical basis of that report was limited both in nature and scope. The World Food Summit, drawing on the available data both as regards insufficient per capita access to food energy (calories) and more direct estimates of malnutrition by anthropometric data and nutrient intake data from the Second RWNS (1992-1993), as well as two subsequent "Updates on the Nutrition Situation" in 1994 and 1996, made several estimates.

12. Approximately 840 million people in developing countries subsist on diets that are deficient in calories (compared with 730 million in the 1987 report). Roughly 96 per cent of food-insecure persons suffer from chronic deficiencies, and approximately 4 per cent experience temporary energy shortfalls caused by natural or human-induced events. Approximately 170 million children under 5 years of age are underweight, representing 30 per cent of the developing world's children. The number of people who are food-insecure due to specific nutrient deficiencies is less well known mainly because of difficulties in definition, measurement and lack of data, but the numbers are likely to be much greater. The best available estimates suggest that approximately 250 million children are deficient in vitamin A, over 800 million people suffer from iodine deficiency, and up to 2,000 million people are affected by iron deficiency and anaemia. The vast majority of the food-insecure, whether their undernourishment is due to deficiencies in energy or micro-nutrients, live in low-income developing countries. Millions more live in conditions which expose them to varying degrees of risk - a concept which is generally well understood but rarely quantified.

13. The Second RWNS also estimated regional trends in more direct anthropometric indicators of malnutrition, notably underweight (weight-for-age) in children. The Third Report, available in December 1997, provides for the first time trends in the prevalence of stunting, or height-for-age, which is considered a better cumulative indicator of well-being for populations of children in countries. 1/ The examination shows that the six regions of the developing world 2/ have very different prevalences of stunting, and that the regions have progressed quite differently since 1980: South Asia has the highest prevalence of stunting but, with South-East Asia and South America, has had the fastest rate of decrease in stunting. Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has made no progress in reducing the prevalence of stunting and had, in fact, a higher prevalence of stunting in 1995 than in 1980. During this period the trends in improvement or deterioration in stunting were stable; that is, there was no evidence indicating a change in the global rates of progress, the only exception being Near East/North Africa. Of

the 61 countries from which trend data on stunting were available, only about 16 met the WHO target which aims at a prevalence rate of around 20 per cent or less, for all countries by the year 2020.

14. The pattern of child malnutrition across the regions is paralleled by patterns of underweight in adults. Thus Asia has by far the highest prevalence of adult underweight, just as it does for child stunting and underweight. 3/

15. Some readers may ask why one should go into these kind of data rather than the, to many, more familiar and straightforward trends in per capita availability of calories as an indicator of food shortage or surpluses. The answer can be simplified as follows: firstly, global and even national trends in food supply are a very poor indicator of hunger and malnutrition for which only data on access give any meaning. Furthermore, the complex causality of hunger and malnutrition needs to be better understood beyond expert food and nutrition analysts' circles. This is particularly important to any discussion on the human right to adequate food and nutrition, where modern scientific discourse now emphasizes nutrition as the wider concept and a result of converging factors relating not only to food but also to health behaviour and services, and to the upcoming understanding of the role of care. The latter applies especially to the vulnerable groups such as young children, pregnant and lactating mothers, the elderly, the disabled and the destitute, which together make up a very large proportion of a population. There is also an emerging information base and concern about the special nutrition conditions of refugees and internally displaced persons.

16. As to causality, a range of factors, forces and processes are in motion, including shifting climatic and other environmental conditions, patterns of economic interest and control over resources, including land and water, issues regarding access to common property, gender-based role patterns and opportunities, the political scene and the nature of governance, social investment and the participation of civil society, to mention some, all affecting the final outcome of human nutritional levels for survival, development, an active and productive life and well-being. Thus, as part of the follow-up to an important recommendation by the World Food Summit in 1996 on the establishment of national "Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems", or FIVIMS, a background document to the FAO Committee on Food Security on background and principles for the guidelines to be developed for such systems, listed four clusters of factors representing four areas of potential vulnerability: 4/

(a) socio-economic and political environment;

(b) performance of the food economy;

(c) care practices; and

(d) health and sanitation.

17. The background document goes on to say: "To achieve success, strategies to eliminate food insecurity have to tackle these underlying causes by combining the efforts of those who work in diverse sectors such as

agriculture, nutrition, health, education, social welfare, economics, public works and the environment. At the national level, this means that different ministries or departments need to combine their complementary skills and efforts to design and implement integrated cross-sectional initiatives that must interact and be coordinated at the policy level. At the international level, this means that a range of specialized agencies and development organizations must work together as partners in a common effort." 5/

18. This general reference to what "ministries and departments" ought to do to eliminate food insecurity, can easily be translated into a human rights language of States' obligations to realize the right to food and nutrition. My 1987 report provided a tool, further elaborated in subsequent publications 6/, 7/, for how to identify such obligations to realize the right to food in the context of food security as a basically household-level development goal. It consisted of a matrix combining the essential generic components of food security, with the level of State interventions to respect, protect, facilitate and fulfil people's right to food and nutrition. States represent, however, only one set of actors in a necessary partnership to realize human rights in general, thus we must add to the obligations of States, the responsibilities of civil society and of each single household or individual as duty-bearers as well as being right-holders. There is no doubt that the complementarity of such partnership for greater efficiency in governance has gained in acceptance since my first report.

19. The FIVIMS initiative has been taken up by an interagency working group with members from a wide range of international organizations interested in improving information on food insecurity. FIVIMS use existing information-gathering systems and promote the sharing of information between partners, at national and international levels. FIVIMS may potentially mean a whole set of new national data that could be drawn on in the reporting by States parties to the human rights conventions relevant to the right to food and nutrition and to the monitoring of their implementation by the respective treaty bodies. My final update report will consider in more depth this and other sources of information relevant to human rights monitoring regarding the right to food and nutrition and related areas of economic, social and human concern.

III. MAJOR EVENTS IN THE PROMOTION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION

20. The purpose of the present section is to give a brief review of major events which have served, directly or indirectly, to advance the attention to the right to food and nutrition since my report in 1987. A more detailed analysis of the recommendations made and their follow-up will be included in the final update in 1999.

21. Among the most important normative developments since 1987 is the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and its world-wide ratification. It is, by now, almost universally binding, with 191 States parties to it. These 191 States have committed themselves, under article 27, to recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial

capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development. But the States parties are obliged under that article to take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing. Under article 24 of the same Convention, States parties are obliged to combat disease and malnutrition, inter alia, through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water.

Global conferences

22. The World Summit for Children, held in New York in September 1990 at the invitation of UNICEF, placed the rights of the child close to the top of the human rights agenda and contributed to the unprecedented speed with which States ratified the Convention. Of great importance was also the decision by UNICEF, when renewing its institutional mission in 1996, to have the Convention on the Rights of the Child guide all activities of UNICEF. The implementation of nutrition field programmes in all countries where UNICEF is active now follows a human rights approach. The experience of UNICEF may be of interest to other agencies now making human rights the main guide to their work.

23. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio Conference), held in 1992, adopted a series of documents of great significance for the right to food, including Agenda 21, which contains a comprehensive programme for global action in all areas of sustainable development.

24. The first International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) was held in 1992 with participation from 159 States and the EC. Several States worked to incorporate significant human rights dimensions in the ICN Declaration and Programme of Action, but met resistance from a number of others. The net negotiated "compromise" result was that reference was made to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but not to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights or the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This reflects the difficulties still prevailing at the beginning of the decade of gaining general recognition of commitments already made by States parties in human rights forums, by those attending on behalf of the same States in some of the global thematic conferences. It also reflects the relatively limited advances made to that date within the United Nations on conceptual and practical linkages between the right to development and development goals and programmes themselves. Only in connection with humanitarian law was the ICN explicit, in its reaffirmation that in that context, food must not be used as a tool for political pressure, and that food aid must not be denied because of political affiliation, geographic location, gender, age, ethnic, tribal or religious identity. The ICN was nevertheless a breakthrough for a truly developmental approach to nutrition problems globally. It demonstrated the need for a solid scientific understanding and database for sound assessments and action to prevent hunger and improve nutritional well-being for all. As such, the information generated and the ongoing dynamic process of follow-up of the Plan of Action by countries and regions no doubt helped prepare the ground for a more mature recognition of the role of nutrition in human, economic and social development and as a human right.

25. The Declaration adopted by consensus at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 pointed out (Part I, para. 5) that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis. Therefore, the right to food and nutrition and other economic and social rights must be given the same attention as civil and political rights.

26. Another major step was taken with the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994. Demographic trends have great significance for the realization of the right to food and nutrition. The Programme of Action adopted at the end of the conference builds on the agreements adopted at the 1990 World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993.

27. Of even more direct relevance was the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, which focused on the eradication of poverty, expansion of productive employment and the promotion of social integration. It emphasized the need to eradicate poverty in the world through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social and economic imperative of humankind. It called for the focusing of policies to address the root causes of poverty, giving special priority to the rights and need of women and children and of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

28. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, in its Declaration and Platform for Action, further advanced concerns that had been initiated with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by the Year 2000, adopted in Nairobi in 1985. The empowerment of women, which has become a major concern of the international community during the last two decades, can have a substantial impact on the elimination of hunger and malnutrition, a point which will be dealt with in some detail in the final update of this report.

29. The second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), which met in Istanbul in 1996 to examine the present situation regarding housing and to develop commitments for the future, helped to increase awareness of the fact that not only had the world population increased from about 4.2 billion to about 5.7 billion during the last two decades, but that an increasing number of people live in cities and that, by the year 2000, over 50 per cent of the population will live in urban areas. This represents new challenges, not least when it comes to supply of food to huge groups of people with very limited sources of income. There is also a need to address the root causes of these phenomena, including rural to urban migration, issues will be addressed in the final update of this report.

30. The World Food Summit, convened in Rome at the invitation of FAO in November 1996, turned out to be a milestone in the efforts to bring attention to the right to food and nutrition as a human right. World leaders gathered there not only formally renewed their commitment to the right to food, but specifically reaffirmed the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.

31. The World Food Summit in November 1996 adopted a set of recommendations regarding institutional follow-up of Objective 7.4 on the right to food, under which "Governments in partnership with all actors of civil society" will:

> Make every effort to implement the provisions of article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and relevant provisions of other international and regional instruments;
>
> Invite the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [the treaty body for the Covenant] to continue to monitor the specific measures provided for in article 11 of the Covenant;
>
> Invite appropriate specialized agencies of the United Nations to consider how they might contribute to the further realization of this right; and
>
> Invite the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in collaboration with relevant specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system and intergovernmental mechanisms, to better define the rights related to food in article 11 of the Covenant and to propose ways to implement and realize these rights.

32. In the final update of this study, a review will be made of the responses so far given to these recommendations. A preliminary survey will be given below.

Agency interest and commitment

33. UNICEF has for many years been in the forefront in promoting a human rights perspective to nutrition assessment, analysis and action. UNICEF is explicitly identified as a responsible partner in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is of world-wide importance due to the nearly universal ratification of the Convention.

34. FAO's present engagement in the right to food is closely tied to the Organization's role in organizing the World Food Summit and the follow-up of objective 7.4. FAO has drawn up a set of activities for this part of the follow-up process within the Organization and has entered into cooperation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the implementation of objective 7.4. For this purpose, a memorandum of understanding was signed by the Director-General of FAO and the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 29 May 1997. FAO's Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the FAO conference held in November 1997 have given full support to the work of FAC in this matter in its resolution 2/97 8/ entitled "Right to food".

35. In the aftermath of the World Food Summit, several initiatives were undertaken in 1997 by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Committee on World Food Security of FAO was addressed, the memorandum of understanding with FAO to enhance cooperation with a view to implementing the recommendations of the World Food Summit was concluded, and several meetings relating to the implementation of these recommendations took place in Rome and Geneva.

36. An expert seminar on the right to adequate food was held under the auspices of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in December 1997, with the purpose to better define the rights relating to food in article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and to propose ways to implement and realize those rights as a means of achieving the commitments and objectives of the World Food Summit.

37. The consultation brought together independent experts, non-governmental organizations and the relevant agencies of the United Nations. It began with a day of general discussions in the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, followed by an expert seminar on the second day. The report by the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Right to Food, 9/ containing information about the consultation, was considered welcomed by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session, its resolution 1998/23 of 17 April 1998. The report contains a set of concrete recommendations:

(a) The participants recommended that the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights draft and adopt a general comment as a contribution to the clarification of the content of the right to adequate food. On that basis, the Committee might want to revise or add to existing reporting guidelines with a view to improving the dialogue with States on the implementation of the right at country level;

(b) Whenever appropriate, the mandates of Special Rapporteurs should include the right to adequate food;

(c) "Best practice" or country case studies on how the right to food is implemented are recommended as a means of supporting the promotion of a human rights approach to food and nutrition problems; case studies on the application of other economic, social and cultural rights would also be helpful;

(d) It would be desirable for the Commission on Human Rights to explore ways in which it could advance, at the political level, the right to adequate food among its members as well as in the United Nations system, notably within the framework of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights;

(e) In response to the World Food Summit's request, the High Commissioner may wish to consider practical ways of strengthening her Office's capacity to deal with the substantive issues of the right to food, including the possibility of appointing an external adviser on the right to food. The High Commissioner may wish to place the issue of a coordinated approach to the right to adequate food throughout the United Nations system high on her agenda; and

(f) The Consultation recommends a follow-up meeting in 1998 to pursue discussions on the contents and means of implementation of the right to adequate food in order to provide the High Commissioner with a full set of recommendations concerning her response to the World Food Summit's request. On that occasion, the participation of human rights organizations currently concerned mainly with civil and political rights as well as that of development agencies not present at the December meeting should be ensured.

38. A particularly significant milestone for the evolving policy discussions and concretization of the human right to food and nutrition came with the recent policy document finalized by the United Nations Development Programme in December 1997: "Integrating human rights with sustainable human development". UNDP is a development agency and therefore its main human rights contributions will be in and through its development activities. Here, it is crucial that UNDP can develop a human rights-based approach to sustainable human development programming, thereby ensuring that human rights will be mainstreamed in UNDP activities and not relegated to specific human rights projects alone. Special attention is paid to economic, social and cultural rights and to the human right to development, e.g, by developing indicators to measure progressive realization. UNDP's human rights-based approach to poverty alleviation emphasizes empowerment, participation and non-discrimination and addresses issues of vulnerability, marginalization and exclusion. The human rights approach of UNDP is universal and holistic, stressing the indivisibility and inter-relatedness of all human rights, economic, social, cultural, civil and political. Special attention will also be paid to ensure that civil and political rights are fully respected in the processes involved in UNDP's programming and implementation of sustainable human development.

39. UNDP is committed to a better integration of human rights follow-up from the major United Nations global conferences of the 1990s - especially from the World Summit for Children, the Earth Summit, the Social Development Summit, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Education for All Conference, the World Conference on Human Rights, the Population and Development Conference, Habitat II and the World Food Summit. This integration of follow-up activities will provide valuable insights and benchmarks for UNDP's current and future human rights programming.

40. The ACC/SCN is the focal point for harmonizing the policies and activities in nutrition of the United Nations system. The role of the ACC/SCN is to serve as a coordinating mechanism, for exchange and information and technical guidance, and to act dynamically to help the United Nations respond to nutritional problems. Its members include 16 United Nations organizations whose work is in some way related to food and nutrition concerns, while interested donor agencies attend as active observers along with a growing number of NGOs. Through its Working Group on Nutrition, Ethics and Human Rights the ACC/SCN has gradually opened up for considering human rights dimensions. At its twenty-fifth session in March/April this year, the ACC/SCN members accepted the offer by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to host its twenty-sixth session in 1999 in Geneva. The theme for the thematic symposium to be held in conjunction with that session was decided to be "The substance and politics of a human rights approach to food and nutrition policies and programming".

41. It is thus clear that an accelerating recognition of the concerns with economic, social and cultural rights has thus taken place during 1996-98. The United Nations reform package proposed by the Secretary-General in July 1997, with its emphasis on human rights as a guide to all activities of the United Nations family, and the coinciding preparations for the fiftieth

anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have made their imprint on the receptivity and interest of several agencies to review their own mandate and performance in relation to human rights.

Non-governmental organisations

42. There has also been an accelerating interest among international non-governmental organizations for the promotion and realization of economic and social rights. In particular, three of these - FIAN (the Food First Information and Action Network), WANAHR (World Alliance for Nutrition and Human Rights) and the Institut Jacques Maritain International took the lead, after the World Food Summit in 1996, in preparing an International Code of Conduct on the Human Right to Adequate Food. The Code was completed in 1997 and has now been endorsed by a large number of non-governmental organizations. The intention is to bring it to the attention of the appropriate United Nations bodies for consideration and possible further processing as an international reference document if not an instrument in its own right.

IV. PLANS FOR THE CONTENT OF THE FINAL UPDATE

43. The tentative plan for the final update is as follows:

Introduction

Chapter 1: Food and hunger - status, dimensions and differentiation in occurrence.

Chapter 2: The World Food Summit commitment, the commitments made at other world conferences during the 1990s, and their follow-up.

Chapter 3: The accelerating recognition of a human rights approach to development issues, exemplified by the right of access to adequate food.

Chapter 4: Evolution in the understanding and acceptance of State obligations - internal and external. The significance to food and nutrition issues of the Declaration on the Right to Development

Chapter 5: Monitoring and dialogue in the relevant treaty bodies

Chapter 6: The role of the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies

Chapter 7: Future prospects.

Conclusions and recommendations

Notes

1/ The data was compiled by the WHO Nutrition Programme Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition. On the Internet, the data is available at http://www.who.org/nut/pem/intro2.htm.

2/ South Asia, South-East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle America and the Caribbean, Near East/North Africa, South America. Figures for stunting are available also for China but as only one survey has been made (1992) no trends can be shown.

3/ "Underweight" is calculated by the percentage of adults with Body Mass Index less than 17 (BMI = weight in kg divided by height in metres squared).

4/ Guidelines for National Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS): Background and Principles. See CFS: 98/5, FAO Committee on World Food Security, twenty-fourth session, Rome, 2-5 June 1998.

5/ Ibid., section 1.2: Cross-Sectoral Dimensions of Food Insecurity.

6/ Oshaug, A., Eide, W.B., Eide, A.: "Human rights: a normative basis of food and nutrition policies". Food Policy, Vol. 19, issue 6, 1994.

7/ "The Right to Food", FAO, 1997, presented at expert consultation on the right to food organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1-2 December 1997.

8/ Adopted on 17 November 1997.

9/ See E/CN.4/1998/21. The report is available at its Internet address: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu4/chrrep/98chr21.htm.